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CHINA SPRUCING UP MILITARY INFRA IN EASTERN SECTOR

China has begun construction of huge habitat for large troop formation in the Eastern Sector, sources said on Wednesday

PLA BUILDING A BRIGADE-SIZE GARRISON

The Peoples Liberation Army is building a brigade size garrison at Gyantse in Tibet, which appears to be meant for the ground forces, sources said. Its construction reportedly began after January. Also, satellite images from June and July confirm that China is building and connecting roads to the border areas at multiple points in the Eastern Sector | P9

STRATEGIC MISSILES ALSO DEPLOYED

The new garrison includes six battalion headquarters and more than 600 sheds for vehicles and equipment. It will be strategically positioned in Gyantse, which is not far from the Indian border states of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim. Sources say China has also moved strategic missiles to the area

2021

WHEN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE GARRISON IS EXPECTED TO BE FINISHED

Opposition to move SC to postpone JEE, NEET

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee suggests joint review petition by all CMs in the Supreme Court

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

AMID a rising chorus against holding JEE/NEET in the midst of a pandemic, the Chief Ministers of seven Opposition-ruled states met on Wednesday to discuss the prospect of filing a joint petition in the Supreme Court to postpone the exams.

The development comes a day after the Centre decided to increase the number of examination centres for JEE and NEET to ensure social distancing. Both the exams are scheduled to be held in early September.

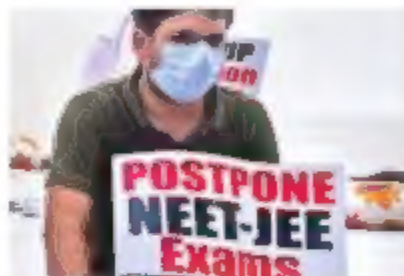
During a virtual meeting called by Congress chief Sonia Gandhi to discuss issues faced by the Opposition-ruled states, West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee mooted the idea of filing a joint petition before the apex court seeking a review, after it rejected a plea on August 17 to postpone the exams. The SC had said, "Life cannot be stopped

and the career of students cannot be put in jeopardy."

"Let us go to the Supreme Court and talk about this matter. This is a mental agony for students and, with limited trains and flight operations, I don't know how they will commute to sit for the exams. The situation is very serious with cases rising, we have to speak up for the children," said Banerjee.

Supporting Mamata's suggestion, the other CMs present in the meeting said they should approach the court keeping in mind that the JEE (Main) is to be held from September 1-6 and NEET on September 13.

Keeping in mind the urgency of the matter, Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh tweeted after the meeting: "I have asked Advocate General, Punjab to coordinate with his counterparts in other states and to file a review petition in Supreme Court on NEET/JEE issue. In the midst of the ongoing



Students protest Centre's move to hold JEE, NEET exams amid Covid | PARVEEN BEM



6.8L NEET students downloaded admit cards: Govt

New Delhi: 6.84 lakh NEET candidates downloaded their hall tickets within five hours after its allocation began on Wednesday, the Centre said. A total of 15.9 lakh students have registered for the exam

Covid-19 pandemic, it is not safe for lakhs of students to appear for these examinations."

Addressing the Chief Ministers, Sonia said the government is indifferent to the difficulty students will have to endure if they have to write the exams amid Covid-19 induced restrictions. She also accused the government of handling the whole

issue in a careless manner.

Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot, Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel and Puducherry CM V Narayanasamy agreed that they are ready to approach the apex court on the matter.

However, Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal reiterated that both the exams will be held as per schedule.

Oppn politicising issue, says DyCM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE state government is determined to go ahead with the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) and National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) on the dates fixed by the National Testing Agency (NTA). Deputy CM Dr C N Ashwath Narayan, who is also Minister for Higher Education, on Wednesday accused the opposition parties of politicising the issue.

He termed the opposition to JEE/NEET as an "attempt by some vested interests to disrupt the exams" and iterated that "Karnataka is well prepared to conduct the exams smoothly with all necessary facilities in the backdrop of Covid-19." P7

Clear the mess you created: SC to Centre

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

ASKING the Centre not to hide behind the RBI, the Supreme Court on Wednesday directed it to clarify its stand on waiving interest on loans during the moratorium period.

"It is your responsibility to take steps under the Disaster Management Act. You have enough powers to decide the issue of waiver. You cannot just depend on the RBI," the bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan said.

The court was hearing a petition filed by Agra resi-

dent Gajendra Sharma.

Noting that the economic distress was created by the Centre's nationwide lockdown, the SC asked the government to decide on the matter within one week.

The court's observation came after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta referred to the RBI's affidavit, and said the banking institutions are also distressed.

"The problem was created by your (Centre) lockdown. This isn't the time to take care of only the business interests. You must also consider the plight of the people," the bench noted.

GOVT TOLD TO MAKE STAND CLEAR BY SEPT 1

New Delhi: Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for one of the petitioners, told SC the loan moratorium scheme is ending on August 31 and it should be extended. "I am only saying that till these pleas are decided, the extension should not end," Sibal said. SC posted the matter for September 1, asking the Centre to come back with its stand on the issue

GST compensation: States not keen on mkt borrowing

ANURADHA SHUKLA @ New Delhi

Thursday's GST Council meeting is likely to be stormy as many states, including BJP-ruled ones, are miffed at non-payment of GST compensation to states.

While Kerala and West Bengal have been very vocal on the delayed payout, many Congress-ruled states have also accused the Centre of denying their rightful dues.

Almost all states are going through a rough patch as revenues have fallen drastically due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Punjab Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal said the state has received compensation only till March 2020 and the Centre is sitting over ₹4,400 crore unpaid dues.

Chhattisgarh has complained the state has not received a single penny since April 2020 as compensation.

Last month, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had also flagged the matter terming the Centre's non-payment of GST compensation to states unconstitutional.

Recently, Bihar Deputy CM and state Finance Minister Sushil Modi

said the Centre has a moral commitment to paying the states.

According to sources from Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh—all BJP-ruled states—too have conveyed their displeasure over the Centre's stand on delaying GST compensation.

Another sticky point is that most states are not in favour of opting for market borrowing. They say the Centre should use the Consolidated Fund of India to pay states or allow them to levy some tax.

According to the 101st Constitution Amendment, states will be compensated for a period of five years from the implementation of GST in July 2017. Under this provision, states will have to be compensated till July 2022 for any losses.

The compensation would meet the shortfall in revenue to the states, assuming a 14% growth annually in GST revenues.

However, the GST revenue growth was less than anticipated. Even after three years of GST rollout, mop-up has mostly remained under ₹1 lakh crore per month. Meanwhile, Finance Ministry sources said all solutions will be discussed. P10,12

COUNCIL MEET TODAY

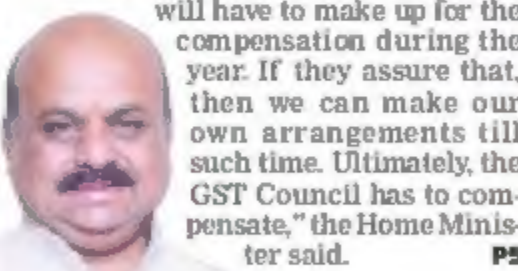
Bommai: Centre should make up for the shortfall

ANUSHA RAVI @ Bengaluru

THE GST Council meeting on Wednesday is set to be a stormy one as states are geared up to demand their due compensation in the face of revenue shortfall. Karnataka, a BJP-ruled state, meanwhile, is all set to present its case strongly to impress upon the Council that timely compensation is a necessity to revive the state's finances that is currently in a bad shape owing to Covid-19 and floods.

The GST Council, which had initially expressed doubts over paying compensation for January-March to states, released it finally and Karnataka is looking at it as a good sign. Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai, who will represent the state at the Council meeting, told TNIE that while all options are being considered, the Centre has to ultimately compensate 14 per cent of GST revenues as per Constitutional provisions and that the state will press for it.

"If not immediately the Union Government, at least in terms of guarantee, will have to make up for the compensation during the year. If they assure that, then we can make our own arrangements till such time. Ultimately, the GST Council has to compensate," the Home Minister said. P5



Can Messi leave Barca?

Barcelona star Lionel Messi has asked club to release him. Here's a brief look what transpired...

● Messi has told Barcelona through his lawyers he wants to leave despite a year remaining on his contract. This may lead to legal complications if both sides remain firm.

● The club buying Messi has to pay Barcelona €700 million as release fee, but the 33-year-old believes he can leave as a free agent. Few clubs can match his weekly salary of €1 million, but the names of Bayern Munich, Manchester City, PSG are doing the rounds.

2001
Year when Messi joined the club's junior team

20
Major titles Messi won at Barcelona



CM woos Japanese firms with K'taka's growth pitch

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

PITCHING Karnataka as the ideal investment destination, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Wednesday advertised his government's decisions on easing lockdown restrictions sooner and bringing amendments to Land, Labour and Industries Acts. In his address during the Indo-Japan Business Forum, Yediyurappa said Karnataka is a nearly \$250 billion economy, with a growth rate of 9.6 per cent and has a conducive atmosphere for FDI from Japan in all sectors.

"The state has set up a Japanese Industrial Township at Vasanthanarasapura near Tumakuru town, and many developmental projects have been executed in collaboration with Japanese companies. In all, 519.55 acres of land has been earmarked in the Japanese Industrial Township, and infrastructure facilities such as roads, power and water supply are being set up. This township focuses on heavy engineering and machine tools, automotive and aerospace components," Yediyurappa told Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotenti-



Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa participating in the Indo-Japan Business Forum at his home office 'Krishna' in Bengaluru on Wednesday | EXPRESS

ary of Japan to India, Satoshi Suzuki.

Asserting that Karnataka was ranked on top of NITI Aayog 2019 Innovation Index, the CM invited Japanese investments. "Keeping the investor-centric approach, our government has launched the New Industrial Policy 2020-2025, to build a prosperous Karnataka and create large-scale employment opportunities. This policy is very forward-looking and brings with it several incentives and regulatory reforms such as land access and labour market regulation," he added.

Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR
President of the Indian Constitution

Dr. B.S. YEDITYURUPPA
Prime Minister

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